

basic and characteristic religion of the Chinese. They have also contained much of polytheism—a polytheism augmented by the state cult and by Buddhism and Taoism, but which in its list of deities is much larger than the sum of all three of the other pan-theons. There has been not a little of divination and of the observance of lucky and unlucky days. It may also be proper to classify with popular religion the pseudo-science, *feng shut*, although the correctness of this can be challenged.

The belief in and the attempt to propitiate or in other ways to control or ward off spirits is, as we have seen, of great antiquity in China—as in so many other parts of the world. In popular belief *kuei*—evil spirits or demons—are all about us and are of many kinds and shapes. They may have eyes on the tops of their heads. On occasion they may take the forms of animals or even of men and women. A *kuei* may be in a man-eating tiger. Great numbers of stories are told of animals—*kuei*—who can take at will the body of a man or especially of a beautiful woman and in that guise work harm. *Kuei* may be in old trees, or in clothes, in objects of furniture, or in mountains or stones. Leaves driven before the wind may each be a *kuei*. *Kuei* are responsible for all sorts of evils and misfortunes. They lurk in ponds and rivers to draw people in and drown them. Indeed, one theory has it that the *kuei* of a drowned person remains in the place of the tragedy and can obtain release only by luring some hapless wight to a similar fate. The *kuei* of a mother who dies in childbirth wins surcease from anguish by bringing on some other woman the same demise. Insane persons are controlled by *kuei*. An epidemic of *kuei* may visit a city—in the old days cutting queues, and strik-

ing people on the streets. By committing suicide a
man may, as
a *kuei*, haunt the person whom he believes to have
hounded him
to the act. *Kuei* may be responsible for illnesses of
various kinds.

They may bring bad crops and famine.

Kuei are associated with the *yin* principle of the
universe. It
will be remembered that for many centuries—just
how long is
uncertain—the Chinese have identified with the *yin*
and the *yang*
the two elements of the dualism which they have
regarded as run-
ning through all nature. The *yin* and the *yang*
have pervaded
much not only of popular lore but of the philosophy
of the learned.
The *yin* stands for Earth, the moon, darkness, evil,
and the female